

YOU'RE A LITTLE BITCH,
NO ONE WILL LOVE YOU
LIKE THIS.
NOT EVEN HER.



DEARDIBUZ

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Am I Evil? by deardmvz

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Billy Hargrove Being an Asshole, Billy Hargrove Redemption, Bisexual Steve Harrington, F/F, Gay Billy Hargrove, M/M, Steve Harrington Needs a Hug, mindflayer!steve

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mindflayer - Character, Neil Hargrove, Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, robin buckley & goth girl sam

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Summary:

Where Billy doesn't die, but instead Steve takes down the mindflayer. And well - now he's acquired a new voice in his head that comes with some incredible(ly scary) perks.

Title is inspired by Diamond Head's "Am I Evil?"

(On temp. hiatus)

1. Chapter 1

Instead of Billy facing the Mindflayer in Starcourt, it was Steve.

He's high out of his mind, stupid on anger and bravery. Too stupid. Stupid enough to die, when Billy Hargrove is on the ground with Eleven. Doing something, something that's taking too much time. The flayer is getting close, and it's last minute.

It's do or die.

So, Steve makes himself the human sacrifice.

Steve, never won a fight (besides the Russian in the basement), Harrington is the one to take on the inter dimensional beast. And somehow, he wins.

Right as it strikes his chest, it dies. The gate closes, the beast still holding his raised hands in its meat claws. Steve seizes as it drops, the sound of it dying like the zap of electricity in a tesla coil. Like an electric chair turning on. Like Frankenstein being resurrected.

A burst of energy that shocks Steve, scares him half to death, and then he drops down in a shaking mess. Falls to the floor, shakes for a moment or two, and then is passed the hell out.

The veins in Billy's arms start to move up his neck as his eyes bulge, falling off Eleven and beginning to puke. Black spider webbing and a goopy creature falling out, dead. Body rejecting it out, hurling until the veins and their contents are discharged. Human. Alone in his body once again.

The same cannot be said for Steve.

When Steve is discharged from the hospital and goes back to school, ready to complete his senior year and get it all over with - he's different. *Very different.*

It started when he heard it in his head in the hospital. A tiny, faint voice. A whisper.

Steve figured it was the room's loudish fan, said nothing of it to his nurses.

It got louder when he was discharged. Whispers becoming multiple, like a hush conversation happening in the next room over. Unable to make anything out, just hear quiet noise. Probably a PTSD side effect from the whole thing. Maybe his hearing was shot.

It only got worse as he started to resume daily life. Whispers raise in volume, coming at odd moments. Like a second person in his head, talking to him.

They become clearer and clearer until it's a voice.

A strange, hollow, echoey voice in his head that talks to him as he works the Family Video counter.

"Mrs. Wheeler is gonna rent Labyrinth. It's for herself though- she's got a big crush on David Bowie's *bigggggg* - heart." There's giggling. "Just kidding - *it's his dick*."

Oh yeah. The voice is uncensored too. And it gets fucking filthy some days, making Steve blush hard and his jeans tighten as it monologues about the wildest shit. Still, he has not figured out how to censor or quiet it besides just shouting or smacking his head till it begs him to stop it & hushes down.

Karen comes over to the counter, and as the voice said, she has Labyrinth in her hand. Holly in the other, resting on her hip while the kid suckles on her thumb. Besides movies, the voice is always

guessing or assuming things. When the light on the way home is gonna change, which cash register he'll have to go to in Melvads, if the clerk at the liquor store is gonna be the one who ID's him. It's *always* right in its guesses & assumptions.

And it's got some sort of power too. A weird strength that comes into Steve's arms when he gets mad or stressed, like he suddenly pops four new muscles. A boost of strength when he gets pissed that he can't open a jar, the cap twisting under his fingers when he tries again and flying off like it was nothing. Or when he suddenly has some strain in his arms lifting a box of hardware in the garage, and then it instantly disappears. Like it melts away, allowing him to lift in ease. It terrifies him whenever it happens.

Steve has thought about telling someone about it - but chooses not to. It hasn't caused any harm to anyone but him, and on more than a few occasions the voice has warned him of dangers ahead. Or saved him from accidentally getting crushed with its surge of strengthen. It's more useful at times than harmful. It holds newfound power - power Steve knows he is greedy to want but, when it's so close... he grabs it and takes it anyways.

He truly sees what power the voice is capable of on a late Friday night, toweling off his hair after a home basketball game.

Billy Hargrove is there, never talking to him really after Starcourt, but still controlling the entire team & harassing just about everyone. He's clearly in a mood today. Came to the game late with a black eye and fat lip, glaring and snapped at every single person who addressed him or made the slightest mistake.

"How the fuck would you lose like that?!" He shouts at Tommy, one biker boot on and the other to his right. Finishing up getting dressed

to go home like the rest of them.

“It was an accident- look I’m sorry the ball slipped-” Tommy’s trying to appease him, which is honestly impossible when he’s in one of these moods.

“It fucking was so *easy*! You’re *sooo* god damn stupid, Hagan.”

Steve winced at the insult, the voice slithering around in his head, bubbling up at Billy’s words. Watching, its hands hovering on Steve’s shoulders.

“Dude, let off him. It was an *accident* .” Steve said quietly, turning to look at the pair. Hargrove snapped up from Tommy, sneering at Steve.

“Shut the fuck up Harrington.”

“Steve it’s fine-” He pauses, eyes going back to Billy. “Look Billy it was just an accident. I’m sorry I dropped it, but maybe if you’d like given me a heads up? I know you have like a black eye and stuff but-”

There’s a sudden thud, a heavy black boot going flying past Tommy’s head, landing behind him with a clomp. There’s audible gasps in the locker room as Tommy flinches at the boot, only prompting Billy to spit on him.

“Shut. The. Fuck. Up. ”

Tommy looks stunned, unsure of what to do after Hargrove threw his boot at Tommy’s face and spit on him. He’s shaking a little, cowering under the big asshole.

Something inside Steve shifts.

Like air changing from hot to cold, like entering a damp cave on a hot summer’s day. The temperature plummets down, goosebumps

sending shockwaves down his arms and spine.

His bones feel hollow as he stands, mind beginning to spin a little in a sudden dizziness. Hargrove looks up from Tommy, eyebrows raising and shoulder slackening. He knows a fight is coming.

“Aw look, The King gonna come defend his Knight from the Big, Dad Dragon?” He opened his arms, chest puffed out. Taunting. “Well come on pretty boy, I’ll give you my first punch. Not like you win with it anyways.”

Then Steve is suddenly not in control.

He’s taken from the driver’s seat, actually no, *RIPPED* out of the driver’s seat by his shoulder , and his body is moving. It’s like being face first into a camera, and then suddenly reeled back from it all to see the camera itself & everything else in a wider lense. Said wider lense is the space in his head, some sort of void. All he can do though is watch Billy’s smile play out on a projection screen as he comes over, Tommy’s eyes wide.

“Steve what are you-”

Tommy gets cut off as Billy goes flying down from a punch, slamming into the lockers behind him. Blood is instantly coming from his nose, eyes wide. His wide hand goes up to his nostrils, touching one lightly and pulling it away to see the red. Steve can feel his knuckles bruising in the void. The strain in his arm from his body throwing a punch, the now relaxing of muscles.

“Y-you- I’m gonna fucking gut y-” Billy splutters out, laughing a little before he launches forward.

However, something unexpected happens. Something new.

Steve’s hands catch Billy’s, halfway into throwing a punch back. He looks horrified as Steve grabs his wrists and *SLAMS* them back into the locker. Steve in his head is scared shitless as his body moves without him, and he can feel Billy Hargrove tensing under him. Muscles trying to fight Steve, who *has to be* significantly weaker. He’s

locked in place though, like instead of Steve there, its something else. Something much, much stronger.

“ *What the fuck....* Harrington h-” His words die in his mouth as he tries to kick, the body only moving to trap his legs too. He’s straining, trying to fight to get free, but Steve’s body has him pinned there. It feels like there’s a smile starting, Steve left to feel it ghosting on his lips as he views Billy’s terror.

He isn’t doing it. This all feels like he is playing a video game & the characters in a cut scene. Or left to watch a car crash through the passenger seat, as his body is leaning in close to Billy. Nose to nose almost.

“*You’re a little bitch, no one will love you like this. Not even her.*” His lips spit in a hushed hiss, aiming into wild, awestruck eyes. Blue, that for once, looked terrified to see Steve Harrington. Whatever the body is saying, it’s hit some deep down nerve that shifted anger into fear.

“G-get off- Harrington get off me-” The words are horrible sounding coming out of his mouth, no matter how much of an ass he is. He sounds like he’s a kid, there’s tears pin pricking in his eyes. The way he’s saying it though, the way the body is still smiling, the way Billy is scared. Truly scared.

Frantically Steve uproots himself, searching around the void. ‘ *Stop stop stop stop its too far PLEASE STOP!*’ he’s screaming, trying to get back into the driver’s seat. He turns wildly, looking to see who’s next to him in the void.

Lightning, terror, destruction.

The spidery Mindflayer greets him, with its black mass that seems to grin. Human teeth flashing in its hooded, eyeless face as Steve screams.

Screams so hard the thing twitches, and then Steve's back.

Out of the movie theatre like void, where Billy Hargrove is in his hands like all is normal. He jumps/yelps at the sudden shift, accidentally shoving the Californian down with an unexplained force. It sends him sliding down the lockers, Steve blinking fast and whatever expression his own body had been wearing a second ago dropping into fear.

Blonde curls were writhing at the bottom of the lockers, hands over his head. Quivering.

Steve was quickly stepping away, hands patting himself like he was checking for keys. Trying to make sure this is all real.

He turned, seeing Tommy staring up wide-eyed. Like he was watching a complete stranger.

“We gotta get out of here come on-”

Steve grabbed Tommy and his sneakers, pulling him by the wrist. Tommy yelps but quickly follows, scooping up his gym bag and Steve snatching his own as they rush out of the locker room. Stunned silence between them as Steve holds his best friend's wrist tight, dragging his only sock wearing self to the parking lot. All the way to the BMW, fumbling the key into lock and making Tommy get in.

They've been driving aimlessly in silence down some back road for 20 minutes when Tommy breaks the silence.

“Dude- what the fuck was that?”

Steve doesn't know. He's clueless.

“I... I..” He tries to make some sense of it, just to give Tommy an

answer, but fails. "I dont know."

"How the fuck did you hold him like that?!"

"I don't know."

"Like you fucking scared him man- you fucking made him cry how-"

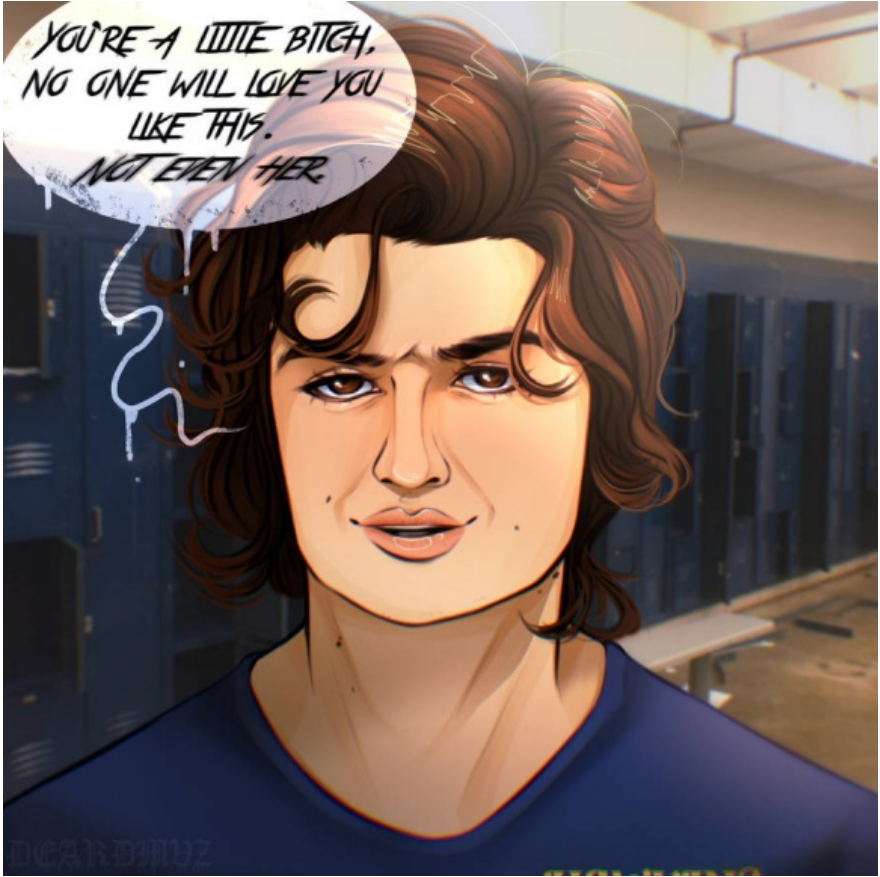
"I DON'T KNOW!" Steve almost screams it, stopping the car in the middle of the road. Nobodies coming, the Hawkins rain softly pelting the car. Steve moves his hands up to his face, covering it for a moment before dragging them down. "Sorry.. Just stressed."

Tommy is silent in the passenger seat, watching.

Tommy's voice shakes as he breaks the silence after a moment.

"Just take me home Steve."

2. ART INTERMISSION



Flayed! Steve art I made from a practice study, turned into a scene from the last chapter!

See the art + an extra gif I made with some creepy Steve on tumblr, [HERE!](#)

3. Chapter 2

Summary for the Chapter:

This chapters dedicated to @Thei for their love & support!! <3

TW's for the f slur & slight homophobic stereotypes.

Steve doesn't sleep that night. Normally the voice sweet talks him to sleep, softly cooing in his ear or sometimes even voicing dirty thoughts that it monologues out until he's fall asleep from exhaustion and trembling legs.

But tonight, it's not welcome. He's scared of it, of whatever it did to his body. Of why he saw the Mindflayer in his head, its huge looming form. Its hooded head with... human teeth lining in circles. Spiraling down some unseen throat it swallowed worlds in. Just sitting in his inner void.

Tonight, he desperately wishes El still had her powers and that the kids weren't 13 year olds. That he could tell someone what was going on without possibly traumatizing a kid more, that they were his age and still his friends.

But he's stuck in his motherly role, no one to rely on besides Robin who is far too busy to be dealing with this. New girlfriend, mom's new boyfriend, first chair clarinet in the band. Taking almost all AP's, working to help support her family. Steve can't put this on her. And obviously not Tommy - both because he's got loose lips and Steve doesn't think he'd even believe him.

So, he's left to himself.

Thinking deep thoughts, sinking into his consciousness as he tries to figure out what's happened. Where did the strength come from, what was moving his body. What the void and movie screen was, how

much of it was even real or was it all wildly skewed.
He just wants to know what was happening to him.

Minutes tick by like hours, Steve left to lay on his bed in the dark with only the pale moonlight illuminating shadows across his walls. Silence dragging on.

Then he hears something.

A metallic rattle. Like a marble bouncing in a closed can, being shaken. It's downstairs, has to be outside. He can hear it from his slightly cracked window, right above the front door of the house. Letting the air in on the warming spring night along with the creaking frogs of the neighbors pond, and now the drifting sounds of a spray paint can being rattled.

Steve's getting up now, and the voice is hissing in his ear.
" It's him- we should beat the shit out of him again. Really teach him his lesson, get him to never mess with us again. Protect ourselves. "

Steve knows what it means by him. Billy - it has to be.

He rushes to find his coat in the darkness, hanging off the door. Toss on his slippers, shuffle quickly down the steps. He paused, seeing red on the front windows already - great, he's gonna have to get that washed off.

He decides to use the side door, cut across the garden to the front. Take Billy at the side in surprise, still in his PJ spiderman pants and a "FAMILY VIDEO EMPLOYEE" shirt that got handed out for the company's anniversary. Little logo on the maroon breast pocket. His bunny slippers are a nice touch too.

He slowly pushed open the door, the sound of the occasional metallic

rattle in between a fwoosh of paint being sprayed on the house filling the night. Quietly, Steve moved just like a ninja to the front. Peeking out, and as always, the voice is correct. There's Billy, smoking a cigarette, spray paint can in hand. Writing something in red across the entire front of his house.

"Asshole" the voice seethes.

Steve says nothing though, makes none of his presence known. Just silently moves closer, closer, and closer. Closer until he can see the blue of Billy's eyes, the way there's a slight redness to them. The shine from probably crying, his still busted up face fixed into a ticked off scowl. Steve's maybe 2 feet from him now, and he still has yet to notice.

Hargrove grinned as he finished, shaking the spray paint can in his hand a little. Practically empty by the sounds of it, him frowning.

"You done?"

Billy just about jumps out of his skin, yelping a *"HOLY FUCK!"* as he dropped the can. Steve's arm slips his control, suddenly snatching the canister out of mid air. The quickness of the newfound reflexes almost hurts, like a strain as he takes hold of the metal object before it hits the ground. Billy's eyes are wide, getting more and more glossy by the moment. About to cry almost at just the sight of Steve catching him.

"You're kinda obvious with this - could you like, y'know... not?" Steve looks up for a moment, eyebrows furrowing. Reading the graffiti on the front of his house.

"...Does that say.. I'm a cocksucking faggot?... dude?" Steve isn't mad, just confused. Like a suburban mom scolding their kid who just got into a fist fight with that disappointment that makes you shatter. Robins taught *him* not to get mad over stupid insults. Say's shes gotten them a million times, their just compliments at this point.

However - Robin did not teach his voice to not get mad about them.

He probably would have forgiven Billy, just told him to wash it off or he'd call Hopper - but then, he's once again not in control. Thrust back into his void, stunned as he watched his own eyes seemingly flicker on a movie screen and then look down at his hands. Body dropping the can from his hands before he feels the expression of rage on his face, and the tensing of his muscles.

Oh fuck.

Billy is slammed back into the house, fresh red spray paint going right into his back, all over his hair and jacket.

“ Don’t throw stones at me when you’re a glass house, Hargrove. I know what you are.”

Hold the fuck on - what does that mean? Is that a double meaning thing? Where in the FUCK did that come from, w-

“WHAT?!”

Steve is suddenly back in his body, the words falling from his mouth. He screeches a little in sudden shock that he's not in the void - this is getting fucking freaky.

“I know you're a - what?! What did that even mean?!” Half of him is asking Billy, the other half to his suddenly possessing voice.

He tries to move his hands off Billy, but can't. They are cemented there, like he's sharing half of his body with something else. Like he's there in his meat suit, but *something else* is in there too. He can feel the grip of *it* on his shoulder, trying to toss him into the backseat. He pushes back against it, refusing. When it sees this, something new happens. His face goes numb almost, and then his lips move, and he starts speaking.

“He’s the cocksucking faggot, Harrington. Can’t you tell with the earring?” The voice that comes out this time sounds like his but- now

it's wrong. It's not like when it takes over normally, where Steve's in the void. It's different now that it has to share the body. It sounds like it's coming from his stomach instead of his throat, echoey and deep. Gargling a little too, like it's chain smoked for 13 years straight. It's very clearly not entirely Steve's voice that comes out, some weird result of him and whatever this *thing* is having to share the body side by side for once.

Then Steve snaps back in control, numbness ripping itself off. Arms still cemented. Billy is stuck, looking wide eyed as the new voice that just came out of Steve's mouth. Steve barely thinks of the whole thing of Billy being gay - to him the guys clearly straight. He's more focused on what the fuck just happened. Hargrove's still got his mouth open in terror though.

"What?! *He is not* - how the fuck did you do that?! Let my arms go too- what the fuck are you??"

The numbness comes over again as his mouth moves without him.

"Don't you want revenge Steve? He's a threat - he makes you, us, mad."

Billy's helpless again in his life and most definitely freaked out as Harringtons switching voices like this is the Exorcist & he's about to hack lime green projectile vomit on him. Scared of whatever is lurking below the surface. Tears are bubbling out of his eyes as he cries a little.

"I won't do it again! Please - Please please please I'm so so sorry please - Just stop please - Steve please I'm begging man - please make it stop *I dont know what the fuck is going on just please you gotta get off I don't like it -*" There's panic in his voice, straining against him. Trying again to wriggle free as he starts to freak out. He looks like what Steve imagines it was like at the sauna, where the kids tried to burn it out of him but it all went wrong. On the floor, crawling, begging in tears with an ugly face of pain and scaredness.

"I-I don't want revenge!" Steve manages to get out. "He's a fucking

asshole but he doesn't deserve this - y-you're fucking him up, he's sorry!"

There is a growl resounding in Steve's head, a sort of "*fine*" before he feels his hands lose all of their power. The voice and its strength recedes back into him, going dormant. Billy's wriggling stops as Steve instantly peels off him, hands going flying to his own chest. Scared of them almost.

It's worse when Billy begins to sob. Profusely, losing his shit as his legs buckle and he crumples down. He shakes, wailing tears out.

To say Steve feels horrible for actions that he didn't even take- its an understatement. He feels devastated, staring down at his bully who is in disarray. He's still got the black eye and fat lip, red staining the back of his hair now.

"Bring him inside, we wash the paint off while it's wet. Move." The voice commands. It doesn't take control though, just whispers in a sort of petty anger. Steve doesn't know what to think of it honestly- but the advice is not bad. Billy is an asshole but not a complete stranger to them all. He went through the Mindflayer, being possessed by something too. He's gotta understand.

"Billy- Billy get up- I- I'm gonna bring you inside-" Billy is useless at moving on his own, Steve able to softly pull him up and begin to lead him by the wrist.

Back around the house, through the garden to the open door. Billy is still sobbing when Steve's tossing his jacket on the floor, leading him to the sink. Picking up his plastic cup, filling it with water.

"I'm getting the paint out, it's safe I promise-" Billy just shakes in response. Still overcome with fear, just letting Steve do whatever. He's gentle as he rubs blonde red stained curls in his finger, using the water to wash them out. The paint drains out quickly, Steve making

sure the flecks and stains come out.

By the time he's done Billy's still shaking a little, quieter though. Tears seem to have fun out as Steve uses the hand towel to dry his hair.

"I'm sorry."

Billy's eyes look up and down at him, but say nothing. Just look scared still- too scared to respond or come close. Steve figures it's a normal reaction considering the day's events, just pointing to the couch. There's some weird teddy bear he got from his mom for Valentine's day and a blanket.

"You can lay there while I wash off the paint - just - just if you leave don't tell anyone about this - I haven't figured out what is yet & I don't know how to tell the kids."

Billy's eyes stay with him for a moment before there's a shaky nod and he's scampering off to the couch. Steve doesn't stay long enough to see what he does, just goes back outside. Finds the garden hose & starts rinsing off the paint.

When the paints washed off, running off into the grass and draining down onto the already dying plants, Steve finally goes inside. The hose is left on the lawn, unrolled and still slightly dripping when he walks through the door.

Billy's on the couch, curled up with the teddy bear and wrapped into the blanket. Slow breaths, he has to be sleeping in some capacity. Tomorrows the weekend, so Steve doesn't bother waking him. Just grabs another blanket from the other couch in the room, walking it over and draping it on his sleeping mass. He looks peaceful for once, despite the bruises or some much earlier fight and the redness in his eyes. He's probably sore from all of the battling today, wiped out and ready to just slumber the night away.

Steve lets him, kicking off his wet bunny slippers next to the couch before he heads upstairs.

Even with Billy there though, he doesn't sleep. Just stays up as the voice whispers unintelligible things from miles away.

The moonlight fades to some semblance of daylight eventually, Steve's eyes feeling bloodshot when it happens. He has yet to hear Billy move, just his muffled snores from downstairs. It's raining this morning, Steve able to hear thunder lowly rumbling in the distance through his still cracked open window.

Steve made his way down the stairs, quiet as possible in half socked feet. The house is silent besides from the snores and the lull of the fridge's motor, purring to keep the beers & a few days old leftovers chilled. He walks past, Billy still on the couch cuddled up with the bear and his two blankets. He must turn in his sleep with the way there wrapped around him, cocooning him almost. Pulled tight and close to his body that faces inwards of the couch, feet tucked into the cushion of the couch. Steve was much too lazy for that, not caring about the monsters under the bed who would snag his feet and drag him under the bed.

He's not scared of them with the voice in his head, soothing him back to mindless LaLa Land with the power it brings.

Now he wonders if the voice is actually his monster, already inside and taking horrifying effect.

He pushes the thought off, brushing it under his mind's imaginary bed. Leave it there and fuck with it later when he had to deal with the issue. For now, he just wanted to get some form of relaxation.

He moved slow as he grabbed the coffee grounds from the top cherry

wood cabinet. Scooping it out into the french press, grabbing a pot for his water to boil. Letting the pot fill up in the sink & turning the stove on high, water sitting idly on the burner as it warms. The voice is still whispering, just far, far off.

He went outside while he waited, bunny slippers back on as he moved through the drizzling rain. The red paint is still visible as it snaked its way in water puddles through the grass, hose left where it was.

Steve made his way to the mailbox, grabbing the paper and whatever mail of yesterdays there was inside. He really only checked the thing once a week, having nobody of interest mailing him shit. The most exciting thing he got was his government hush money, sent in \$50 bills in a yellow envelope with no return address. \$300 per week, enough to keep Steve reasonably happy. He figured he'd save it to buy something nice on a rainy day like today.

For now though it all sat in secret stashes around the house, taped to the backs of things or locked away. Steve had a map drawn over the house's old floor plans, marking off each location where money was stashed. He'd even gotten a few safes buried in the garden, just in case. It felt batshit crazy to do, but it was what he'd done & how it was going to stay.

The newspaper had not much in it - the day before yesterday apparently uneventful. Not much happened April 24, 1986, besides random stock market information and some kid named James Kyleson winning a kite.

When the paper held nothing, to the TV one went. He hadn't really wanted to put it on, afraid it'd wake the sleeping blonde giant, but eh who cares. He'd spray painted his house last night. For all Steve cared, he could just go back to sleep or smother himself with the pillow if it bothered him.

The water was still working up to a boil as Steve found the remote, flicking the TV on to the news channel.

“This is Peter Jennings and we have breaking news with ABC News. There has been a nuclear accident in the Soviet Union and the soviets have admitted that it happened. The soviet version is this- one of the atomic reactors at Chernobyl, an atomic power plant in the city of Kiev, was damaged and there is speculation in Moscow that people were injured and may have died.”

Steve can feel his heart sinking, sighing as his arms slump. Another day, another massive life altering event in the world. He's got no clue how much this will impact everything, considering how secretive the Russians are with the information they release, but he does know this is probably major. Nuclear is something beloved and feared, and dangerous too. He's heard Dustin talk about how an atomic bomb explosion could wipe out a city, blow the people away like dust. How the radiation could kill you, cause sickness beyond belief and possibly kill you. The voice is starting to move closer, becoming more audible despite how fast it's talking.

The newscaster keeps talking about how a radioactive cloud must have reached all the way to Sweden and Norway and Finland. Steve's got no idea how bad it is but he already wants to turn it off. But he's so focused on the TV, listening to the horrible news drone on, that he doesn't notice the water boiling. It takes him a moment to realize but it's enough to pull him off the TV, hitting the power button on the remote and killing the thing. He's had enough bad shit happen here & he doesn't need to see more.

When he's finally done making his black coffee (because truly he is a bitter bitch), Steve's making his way outside. It's raining a little harder, thunder closer now. Billy is asleep on the couch last he checked, still wrapped up tight with his teddy bear. Steve's debating on just telling him to keep it. Not like his mom uses it or even looks at anyways.

The rain softly patters on the awning as he set down his coffee on a glass table, fishing into his spiderman pajama pocket for his

cigarettes. He found one, pulling it out along with the silver lighter. He placed it between his teeth and flicked open the silver canister, flame popping up. It only takes a moment for it to catch, smoke puffing from his mouth. He sat in his fathers usual white metal chair, his mothers ceramic eeyore mug seeming fitting for the day.

Coffee and cigarettes on a rainy morning, where lightning strikes in the distance and thunder rolls. It's peaceful, the voice finally quieting. He's left alone to himself and just mother nature, where she replenishes her dying baby with her tears as the god's bowl above. Each lightning flash is a pin being hit down, each rumble of thunder is the bowling ball spinning down the alley. Steve wonders who's winning the game.

The slider door opens behind him, a bleary eyed and confused looking Billy out.

"Where am I?" He asks, rubbing his eyes with the side of his hand. Gentler around the blackened one, where a purple ring has formed.

"My place. You spray painted the front of it, I went all possessed again, you kinda shut down - I washed it all off don't worry. You're good."

Billy looks from Steve to the sky for a moment, thunder sounding again.

"Oh."

He says nothing more, just steps out under the back patio awning, closes the slider, and pads his way over. He finds Mrs. Harrington's chair and sits himself down across from Steve. The blonde eyes his coffee, eyebrow raising.

"We can share. I've got another cigarette too." Steve passes over the coffee, Billy taking it in steady hands, guiding it to his lips while Steve finds his other cigarette and moves the patios ashtray to sit between them. The blonde takes the cigarette as well once he places the mug down, using his own lighter he produces from his pants pocket to light it up.

There's a solid minute of silence as the rain begins to get thicker, moving from a light drizzle into progressing sheets. The pair don't move though, just sit under their covering and feel the occasional spray of stray droplets bouncing off the railing onto their arms.

Steve debates in his head on bringing it up. Starting with an "Im sorry the voice in my head possessed me & beat your ass" or "I'm sorry *it* called you a fag - are you one though cause its always correct?". Maybe a "What the hell happened to your face?" or "Why are you so bitchy sometimes?".

"There was a nuclear accident with the Soviet's today-" Steve settles on, pulling the cigarette out of his teeth to speak. "In Kiev, said there was a meltdown of some sort. They all found out when they heard about the radiation amounts being oddly high at the plants farther up. The radiation cloud travelled or something."

Billy's eyebrows raised again, then deepened into a crease on his forehead.

"They think anyone died?"

"Yeah. Can never know though with the Russians - I'm guessing it's gonna be some big cover up like Starcourt."

The two had never really talked about Starcourt before, not to each other at least.

The one thing that binded them together, in an odd way they could never shake. They were no longer mortal enemies after that - not allowed to be almost, by the secret, traumatic event they had to share.

The kids had tried to talk about it once with Steve, right after he got out of the hospital the week after the mall burnt down. It didn't go far though, everyone just quietly agreeing this sucked and they wanted it to be over. Billy hadn't been present for some reason, Joyce, El, and Mike gone as well. Hopper was still dead, and apparently another person the adults had befriended was gone too.

Everything was terrible.

"I fucking hate the Russians." Billy scowled, raising the coffee to his lips. He sipped quietly, mindful to hold the handle tightly with his hand and keep a pinky underneath the bottom for added support. Steve could only laugh, nodding. "Me too man. They fucking suck - they've got some type of body count building now... I don't know who gave them the thought that messing with otherworldly and nuclear shit would go without disaster. I mean look at us."

Billy laughed, holding out his arm and passing the mug off. Steve took up the coffee while Hargrove pointed, tracing down his own arms.

"It left scars and shit in my arms- I can see the veins clearly now." He was right, you could. They looked raised in some areas, other ones whitening like scars. It was barely visible unless you looked close, but as you got further and further up his elbow they became more and more apparent. They remind Steve of his own, that constrict him from doing anything without a shirt in front of people other than those involved, in fear that they'll get suspicious and realize the blooming supernova scars aren't from a fire.

"Damn- they're all in your weenis."

Billy blinked, head tilting in concern and slight disappointed shock.

"...Harrington the weenis is on the other side of my elbow. Also, *never* try to say that again."

Steve went a little red, pushing out a "sorry" and filling his face with

coffee to stop any rambling that might come out. Robin taught him that trick, fill your face with food or something to be quiet, and surprisingly it did work.

Steve set the coffee down once he'd gathered himself, replacing it with his cigarette.

"They got you with that, me with the other Mindflyer scars, the kids with war veteran level PTSD or something- jeez they are fucking assholes."

Billy nodded. "Fuck the Russians."

"Exactly. Fuck those stupid Russians and their bad elevators too." Billy opened his mouth to question the elevators, but Steve filled it with a "don't." So he didn't.

And they went back to sitting in silence as the gods bowed above.

It edged on for around 4 minutes, them passing the coffee back and forth till it was practically empty, when Billy asked a new question.

"What was all of that yesterday? You went all Regan." The question that Steve had been thinking of asking. However, the little exorcist joke, saying Steve '*went Regan*', sparked up the voice to hiss in his ear. To close for comfort, like it was breathing down his neck suddenly.

'That bitch is nothing compared to me.'

Steve must have visibly winced at it, Billy's face twisting a little. "Did I say something?"

"I have this voice-" Steve started. Stopped. Tried to continue on and stopped again.

"You have a voice, yeah? What, you're gonna tell me you're a schizo with some second personality that chokes people?" He shrugged,

uncaringly leaning back in the white chair. “Man, nothing can scare me anymore after that alien outer dimensional shit. *Nothing.*”

So Steve blurted out all of it. About how he woke up in the hospital and thought it was the fan, how it got louder, how it always guessed right, how it gave him sudden strength sometimes & better reflexes. How yesterday was the first time he’d ever had that possessed stuff happen or been able to talk with it aloud, hear its voice. It all felt good to get out, someone finally able to get his bullshit dumped on them.

But then, then came the worst part.

“And- and when I was in the void, while I was like pinning you... I saw... *it* .”

“It? Harrington, the fuck is.....” Thunder rumbled and lightning struck, crashing down. One of the gods must have gotten a strike up there with the power of it, enough to hear a tree snap in the forest behind the house.

The storm is here, and Billy understood what ‘ *it* ’ meant.

“Him- or her or.. *It* . I don’t know, but it was just... there. I was in that void thing, watching me beat you up and like I told it to stop and turned and there it was. It had these teeth that like, they circled-”

“Into a bottomless pit in it’s.. face?”

Steve nodded, sighing. The coffee was practically gone but he took up the mug in slightly shaking hands, bringing it to his lips. Sipping up the last of it to try to clear his mind as the storm came down around them, droplets hitting the tan awning hard before sloshing off in a wave of water that came cascading off its edge.

“Fuck.” Billy sucked in his cigarette like he was clinging to it, the end

withering up into ash and falling quickly into the ashtray. He smoked like Steve's mom did, so stressed out that she finished cigarettes in record time. It was weird to see him in her usual chair too - a seat that had to be apparently one for chain smokers.

"I don't know if the voice is him though."

'I am not a him. I am a mother, destroyer of worlds.'

Steve coughed hard, eyes widening as the voices loud hiss. It sounded like it was right there, right in his face screeching it at him. Not a him - a her, got it. And was that confirming it was the Mindflayer??

"Are you the Mindflayer? Are you still here?"

Billy's eyebrows were furrowed again, confused as to whatever was happening in Steve's head and who he was talking to. Billy's mouth opened but the voice hissed so loud that Steve shrunk down, unable to hear what came out.

'I am the mother of hell, destroyer of worlds. I can inhabit a vessel and take over, I can tear down worlds on my own. But now, you, child, and I, mother? We are one.'

It's right there. Right there talking to him - the Mindflayer is inside of him. The monster is inside him, and the world's spinning and the lightning is crashing and-

And Steve faints.